A GUIDE TO UNICEF ISSUES IN THE EARTH SUMMIT'S BLUEPRINT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

Children and Agenda 21

Children and Agenda 21

A GUIDE TO UNICEF ISSUES IN THE EARTH SUMMIT'S BLUEPRINT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

The full text of Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration are contained in the first three volumes of the official report of UNCED to the UN General Assembly under document A/CONF. 151/26.

Published by UNICEF, Geneva, October 1992.

Photographs by Mark Edwards/Still Pictures

Contents

The Earth Summit and children	4
Children and the Rio Declaration	7
Children and Agenda 21	11
Children and youth in sustainable development	15
Global action for women towards sustainable and equitable development	19
Protecting and promoting human health	23
Protection of freshwater resources	31
Combating poverty	35
Demographic dynamics and sustainability	39
Strengthening the role of NGOs: partners for sustainable development	41
Promoting education, public awareness and training	43
Financial resources and mechanisms	47

READEX
FICHE

The Earth Summit and children

The biggest meeting of world leaders in history – the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, otherwise known as the Earth Summit – did well for the world's children.

- **It built on the achievements of the World Summit for Children;**
- **It supported the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;**
- **It fully integrated UNICEF strategies and programming approaches into a unique action plan which will set the world's environment and development agenda into the next century; and**
- **It greatly strengthened the "human-centred, poverty-alleviating" approach to sustainable development adopted by UNICEF and other agencies.**

A total of 105 heads of state or government, plus high-level representatives of virtually every other nation, attended the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 3 to 14 June 1992.

Altogether, including the parallel citizens' events at the Global Forum, at least 30,000 people went to Rio to see for themselves how our leaders intended to safeguard life on Planet Earth.

And thanks to the colossal media, government and NGO attention devoted to this unique gathering, millions of people around the world were able to follow real political commitments being made at the very highest level.

Many of the world leaders made some reference to children in their speeches. Many were rhetorical, talking about "our children's children" and "a world fit for our children to live in". But some made encouraging references to the specific energies and talents of children – as people who can take action *today* on environment and development, not just be dealt with as passive victims of the adult world's inadequacies.

Children themselves were also much in evidence: from the local street children, whose plight could not be hid-

den by fresh paint and protocol, to the luckier ones able to take part in a host of events showing that "future generations" are very much a part of today's reality.

These events pointed to the joy, sadness, hope, fear, sense and nonsense, arrogance and humility which envelop our efforts to achieve a fair, peaceful and sustainable future for all lifeforms in the Earth's fragile ecosystem.

Children were even seen, and heard, in the sombre, high-security Summit chamber – as members of the official Netherlands delegation and as representatives of the Gaia Viking Ship and Voice of the Children projects.

Thus, for a few fleeting moments in a few fleeting days, children were centre stage at the international community's greatest show. But the spotlight quickly moves on. And we must already face the question: "Was it worth it?"

This booklet's purpose is to help you give UNICEF's unequivocal answer to this question ("Yes!") and to guide you to key sections of the Earth Summit's two major documents: the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the 600-plus pages of "Agenda 21" – an unprecedented global blueprint for life on Earth into the next century.

Children and the Rio Declaration

The real and lasting success for children at the Earth Summit is in the small print of the substantive decisions taken by the world leaders – decisions which took more than two years of intensive global negotiation to achieve.

These are the words that will change the rest of our working lives. These are the words that will guide governments, ministries, counterparts, partners, bilateral donors and the United Nations system. The decisions from Rio will set the agenda for all future development cooperation.

The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development adopted by the world leaders contains 27 succinct principles for national and international behaviour. Many of these are now universally accepted for the first time and will have much greater political priority on national and international agendas.

The Declaration reflects a delicate balance of the key concerns of both industrial and developing countries. While

The Viking ship Gaia arriving in Rio de Janeiro for the opening of the Global Forum.

the industrial countries generally accepted that they caused most of the world's environmental problems (and should therefore provide resources for future environmental protection), the developing countries secured agreement on several broader principles vital to their own development.

These include the eradication of poverty as an indispensable component of sustainable development, recognition of the special needs of developing countries, and promotion of a more supportive and open international economic system.

Also among the Declaration's principles are several which have direct relevance to UNICEF work, including:

- that human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development and are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with Nature;

- that the right to development must be fulfilled if we are to equitably meet development and environment needs of present *and future* generations; and

- that environmental protection is an integral part of the development process: it cannot be considered in isolation from it.

These are, in fact, three of the first four principles in the Declaration, which also includes the following on women and youth:

- that women have a vital role in environmental management and development – and their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development; and

- that the creativity, ideals and courage of the youth of the world should be mobilized to forge a global partnership to achieve sustainable development and a better future for all.

Ideally, this last principle could have referred to "children and youth". But, in Rio, political consensus on the Declaration was only achieved by several balancing agreements not to reopen text previously agreed at the New York preparatory meeting in March.

Given that Agenda 21 now has a chapter entitled "children and youth" (see page 15), we should assume that the Declaration's reference to youth implicitly includes children.

The adoption of these principles greatly strengthens the

political commitment to children and *human* development; to adjustment with a human face; to the basic services and primary health care approaches; to practical, environment-friendly actions in health, education, nutrition, water and sanitation; and to the full participation of women in development.

The spirit of the Rio Declaration gives a new significance to a fundamental belief that human development is not simply a matter of charity but the top priority for survival, progress and justice in one, interdependent world.

The statement of principles is, of course, exactly that : a carefully crafted, lofty-yet-expedient form of words to which few can disagree and none are bound. The real substance of what was achieved at Rio is in the massive document known as "Agenda 21".

The Rio Centro plenary hall – site of the official Earth Summit

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON
ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Children and Agenda 21

Agenda 21, a global blueprint for action on environment and development into the next century, is not easy reading. As an official document of the United Nations it has more than 600 pages. There is not a sentence in it that has not been scrutinised and negotiated by representatives of all the world's governments and thousands of organisations.

But it is a unique and historic document. If planning is the process of translating grumbling into action, Agenda 21 does exactly what it was meant to do: tell our governments, and us, how we must act to safeguard life on Earth.

It is a document by bureaucrats for bureaucrats and extremely important because of that. It may not be trendy, or easily quotable, but this is a document that will change the way governments govern. The popular memories of the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm may be of "fringe" environmental groups lobbying their issues into the mainstream media: the real action point was the document which recommended the creation of

Family life in Rio's Rocinha favela

governmental ministries of environment to set policies and execute programmes to deal with environmental issues. The popular memory of the 1990 World Summit for Children may be that great photograph of 71 world leaders all at the same meeting: but the real follow-up is the Action Plan document which we now see governments using to set radically improved policies and programmes for children. Agenda 21 tells governments how and why to set policies and programmes across virtually the entire range of their activities.

The sheer scope of Agenda 21 can be seen by the list of the headings to its 40 chapters in four sections (see panel page 13). The chapters of major interest to UNICEF are those marked with an asterisk – on Children and Youth, Health, Women, Freshwater, Poverty, Demographics, NGOs, Education/Public Awareness and Training, and, of course, Finance.

It is the texts of these chapters which represent the major UNICEF achievement for children at the Earth Summit. Before the third UNCED Preparatory Committee meeting in August 1991, the draft texts contained little or no specific reference to UNICEF's major goals and strategies for children, particularly as articulated by the World Summit for Children.

Two key quotes are, in Chapter 6 on "Protecting vulnerable groups":

> "Specific major goals for child survival, development and protection were agreed upon at the World Summit for Children *and remain valid also for Agenda 21*. Supporting and sectoral goals cover women's health and education, nutrition, child health, water and sanitation, basic education and children in difficult circumstances."

And in Chapter 25 on "Children in sustainable development":

> "Governments, according to their policies, should take measures to:
>
> (a) ensure the survival, protection and development of children, in accordance with the goals endorsed by the 1990 World Summit for Children;
>
> (b) ensure that the interests of children are taken fully into account in the participatory process for sustainable development and environmental improvement."

Thus, after Rio, we can now say that *all* the results of the World Summit for Children were unanimously endorsed and strengthened by the Earth Summit and fully integrated into the text of Agenda 21.

As this will be the cornerstone of most future development cooperation, children's issues are much more firmly established as a priority for national and international development programmes. This will strengthen UNICEF activities across the board – in country programmes, in sectoral programmes, in new partnerships, in securing additional resources and in communication and advocacy.

This was achieved by a lot of diligent lobbying and hard work with countless delegates, participants and friends both at the UNCED meetings and around the world – and by having in hand the policies, programmes and pragmatic experience (particularly *field* experience) to make sense at the world's most important negotiations on development and environment.

The following sections describe the key texts of the Agenda 21 chapters of major interest to those concerned with children. Each chapter contains a number of *Programme Areas* for that subject: each Programme Area includes subheadings on *Basis for action*, *Objectives* and *Activities*.

Agenda 21: Chapter headings

1. Preamble

Section I: Social and economic dimensions

2. International cooperation to accelerate sustainable development in developing countries and related domestic policies.
3.* Combating poverty.
4. Changing consumption patterns.
5.* Demographic dynamics and sustainability.
6.* Protecting and promoting human health.
7. Promoting sustainable human settlement development.
8. Integrating environment and development in decision-making.

Section II: Conservation and management of resources for development

9. Protection of the atmosphere.
10. Integrated approach to the planning and management of land resources.
11. Combating deforestation.
12. Combating desertification and drought.
13. Sustainable mountain development.
14. Promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development.
15. Conservation of biological diversity.
16. Environmentally sound management of biotechnology.
17. Protection of the oceans and protection, rational use and development of their living resources.
18.* Protection of the quality and supply of freshwater resources.
19. Environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals.
20. Environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes.

21. Environmentally sound management of solid wastes and sewage-related issues.
22. Safe and environmentally sound management of radioactive wastes

Section III: Strengthening the role of major groups

23. Preamble.
24.* Global action for women towards sustainable and equitable development.
25.* Children and youth in sustainable development.
26. Recognizing and strengthening the role of indigenous people and their communities.
27.* Strengthening the role of Non-Governmental Organizations: partners for sustainable development.
28. Local authorities' initiatives in support of Agenda 21.
29. Strengthening the role of workers and their trade unions.
30. Strengthening the role of business and industry.
31. Scientific and technological community.
32. Strengthening the role of farmers.

Section IV: Means of implementation

33.* Financial resources and mechanisms.
34. Transfer of environmentally sound technology, cooperation and capacity-building.
35. Science for sustainable development.
36.* Promoting education public awareness and training
37. National mechanisms and international cooperation for capacity-building in developing countries.
38. International institutional arrangements.
39. International legal instruments and mechanisms.
40. Information for decision-making.

The addition of a new programme area on "Children in sustainable development" into this chapter makes the survival, protection and development of children a major objective of Agenda 21 actions as a whole.

In brief, the programme area also endorses the following:

- Activities for Primary Environmental Care;
- Mobilisation of communities through children;
- Overriding attention to education of the girl child;
- Incorporation of children's concerns into all relevant policies and strategies for environment and development;
- Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and
- That UNICEF should maintain cooperation and collaboration with other organisations to develop programmes for children and programmes to mobilise children.

Because of its importance, here is the full text of the programme area on children (with UN document paragraph numbers):

B. Children in Sustainable Development

Basis for action

25.12 Children not only will inherit the responsibility of looking after the Earth, but in many developing countries they comprise nearly half the population. Furthermore, children in both developing and industrialized countries are highly vulnerable to the effects of environmental degradation. They are also highly aware supporters of environmental thinking. The specific interests of children need to be taken fully into account in the participatory process on environment and development in order to safeguard the future sustainability of any actions taken to improve the environment.

Objectives

25.13 Governments, according to their policies, should take measures to:

(a) Ensure the survival, protection and development of children, in accordance with the goals endorsed by the 1990 World Summit for Children;

(b) Ensure that the interests of children are taken fully into account in the participatory process for sustainable development and environmental improvement.

Activities

25.14 Governments should take active steps to:

(a) Implement programmes for children designed to reach the child-related goals of the 1990s in the areas of environment and development, especially health, nutrition, education, literacy, and poverty alleviation;

(b) Ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, at the earliest moment and implement it by addressing the basic needs of youth and children;

(c) Promote primary environmental care activities that address the basic needs of communities, improve the environment for children at the household and community level and encourage the participation and empowerment of local populations, including women, youth, children and indigenous people, towards the objective of integrated community management of resources, especially in developing countries;

(d) Expand educational opportunities for children and youth, including education for environmental and developmental responsibility, with overriding attention to the education of the girl child;

(e) Mobilize communities through schools and local health centres so that children and their parents become effective focal points for sensitization of communities to environmental issues;

(f) Establish procedures to incorporate children's concerns into all relevant policies and strategies for environment and development at the local, regional and national levels, including those concerning allocation of and entitlement to natural resources, housing and

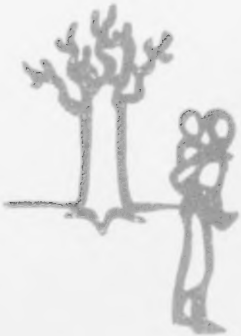
recreation needs, and control of pollution and toxicity in both rural and urban areas.

25.15 International and regional organizations should cooperate and coordinate in the proposed areas. UNICEF should maintain cooperation and collaboration with other organizations of the United Nations, Governments and non-governmental organizations to develop programmes for children and programmes to mobilize children in the activities outlined above.

As noted earlier, the text could have been clearer in defining both youth *and* children as positive actors for environment and development. But the intent and spirit of the whole chapter makes this implicit.

The objectives of the youth programme area are to:

- promote dialogue between the youth community and government;
- reduce youth unemployment;
- promote youth representation in all UN processes; and
- address human rights abuses against young people.



92 GLOBAL FORUM
breastfeeding is an ecological act

Agenda 21 recognizes that its successful implementation depends on the active involvement of women in economic and political decision-making and on the effective implementation of several existing activities, including those in the World Summit for Children Plan of Action.

All the activities in this chapter, in fact, either incorporate or complement the WSC goals, including:

- Measures to eliminate female illiteracy;
- Strengthening health facilities;
- Promoting universal access to primary and secondary education for girl children and women;
- Reducing workloads of women and girl children;
- Providing environmentally-sound technologies which have been designed and developed with women;
- Providing accessible and clean water;
- Providing efficient fuel supply and adequate sanitary facilities; and
- Providing adequate social support systems, such as child-care and day-care facilities.

The exact text for these activities is in paragraph 24.3, which urges governments to implement the following:

> (a) Measures to review policies and establish plans to increase the proportion of women involved as decision makers, planners, managers, scientists and technical advisers in the design, development and implementation of policies and programmes for sustainable development;
>
> (b) Measures to strengthen and empower women's bureaux, women's non-governmental organizations and women's groups in enhancing capacity-building for sustainable development;

(c) Measures to eliminate female illiteracy and to expand the enrolment of women and girls in educational institutions, to promote the goal of universal access to primary and secondary education for girl children and for women, and to increase educational and training opportunities for women and girls in sciences and technology, particularly at the post-secondary level;

(d) Programmes to promote the reduction of the heavy workload of women and girl children at home and outside through the establishment of more and affordable nurseries and kindergartens by Governments, local authorities, employers and other relevant organizations and the sharing of household tasks by men and women on an equal basis; and to promote the provision of environmentally sound technologies which have been designed, developed and improved in consultation with women, accessible and clean water, an efficient fuel supply and adequate sanitation facilities;

(e) Programmes to establish and strengthen preventive and curative health facilities, which include women-centred, women-managed, safe and effective repro-

ductive health care and affordable, accessible, responsible planning of family size and services, as appropriate, in keeping with freedom, dignity and personally held values. Programmes should focus on providing comprehensive health care, including pre-natal care, education and information on health and responsible parenthood, and should provide the opportunity for all women to fully breastfeed at least during the first four months post-partum. Programmes should fully support women's productive and reproductive roles and well-being and pay special attention to the need to provide equal and improved health care for all children and to reduce the risk of maternal and child mortality and sickness;

(f) Programmes to support and strengthen equal employment opportunities and equitable remuneration for women in the formal and informal sectors with adequate economic, political and social support systems and services, including child care, particularly day-care facilities and parental leave, and equal access to credit, land and other natural resources.

Sub-paragraph (e) needs some explanation. This word-

ing also appears in almost identical form in the chapters on Health and Population. In earlier drafts there had been stronger language on family planning. But attempts by some groups to include the term "safe abortion" generated such controversy that the final negotiated text became weaker than the original. In Rio, delegations resisted much hard lobbying on population and family planning issues to avoid reopening negotiations on the text already agreed – which would threaten consensus and adoption of the whole Agenda 21 document.

Also of interest, in paragraph 24.8, in a list of several women-related areas recommended for increased research, are the following:

> "The impact of structural adjustment programmes on women. In research done on structural adjustment programmes, special attention should be given to the differential impact of those programmes on women, especially in terms of cut-backs in social services, education and health and in the removal of subsidies on food and fuel."
>
> "The integration of the value of unpaid work, including work that is currently designated 'domestic', in re-

source accounting mechanisms in order to better represent the true value of the contribution of women to the economy, using revised guidelines for the United Nations System of National Accounts, to be issued in 1993."

"Programmes to create rural and urban training, research and resource centres in developing and developed countries that will serve to disseminate environmentally sound technologies to women."

On international and regional cooperation and coordination, paragraph 24.9 includes the following:

"UNIFEM (the United Nations Development Fund for Women) should establish regular consultations with donors in collaboration with UNICEF, with a view to promoting operational programmes and projects on sustainable development that will strengthen the participation of women, especially low-income women, in sustainable development and in decision-making. UNDP should establish a women's focal point on development and environment in each of its resident representative offices, to provide information and promote exchange of experience and information in these fields."

LIAR NO BRASIL
PREVENÇÃO DO CÂNCER
SIDA
CÂNCER
COM UM
SIMPLES
EXAME

Chapter 6: Protecting and promoting human health

With the chapter on Children and Youth, this was the main focus for UNICEF advocacy on Agenda 21. Where, a year ago, there was no reference to the World Summit for Children goals, the final text explicitly builds on them, at one stage incorporating text from the WSC Plan of Action.

In brief, the major progress on this chapter was:

- Adopting WSC health goals as the health goals for Agenda 21;
- Adding references to improved vaccines for children (i.e. the Children's Vaccine Initiative); and
- Strengthened language on breastfeeding, nutrition, acute respiratory infections and other child-related aspects.

The chapter identifies five major programme areas for health, and begins with this introduction:

One of the hundreds of booths at the Global Forum

6.1 Health and development are intimately interconnected. Both insufficient development leading to poverty and inappropriate development resulting in overconsumption coupled with expanding world population can result in severe environmental health problems in both developing and developed nations. Action items under Agenda 21 must address the primary health needs of the world's population since they are integral with the achievement of the goals of sustainable development and primary environmental care. The linkage of health, environmental and socio-economic improvements requires intersectoral efforts. Such efforts involving education, housing, public works and community groups including businesses, schools and universities, religious, civic and cultural organizations, are aimed at enabling people in their communities to ensure sustainable development. Particularly relevant is the inclusion of prevention programmes rather than relying solely on remediation and treatment. Countries ought to develop plans for priority actions, drawing on programme areas (a) to (e) which are based on coopera-

tive planning by the various levels of government, NGOs, and local communities. An appropriate international organization, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) should coordinate these activities.

The programme areas are:

A. Meeting primary health care needs, particularly in rural areas;
B. Control of communicable diseases;
C. Protecting vulnerable groups;
D. Meeting the urban health challenge; and
E. Reducing health risks from environmental pollution and hazards.

The major UNICEF inputs were to areas *B* and *C*.

Control of communicable diseases

The full text of the Basis for Action and Objectives sections are quoted here for future reference. *(Bold text added for highlights.)*

Basis for action

6.10 Advances in the development of vaccines and chemotherapeutic agents have brought many commu-

nicable diseases under control. However, many important communicable diseases remain for which environmental control measures are indispensable, especially in the field of **water supply and sanitation such as cholera, diarrhoeal diseases, leishmaniasis, malaria, and schistosomiasis**. In all such instances, the environmental measures, either as an integral part of primary health care or undertaken outside the health sector, form an indispensable component of overall disease control strategies, together with health and hygiene education, and in some cases, are the only component.

6.11 With **HIV infection levels** estimated to increase to 30-40 million by the year 2000, the socio-economic impact of the pandemic is expected to be **devastating for all countries and increasingly for women and children**. While direct health costs will be substantial, they will be dwarfed by the indirect costs of the pandemic - mainly costs associated with the loss of income and decreased productivity of the workforce. The pandemic will inhibit growth of the service and industrial sectors and significantly increase costs of human capacity-building and retraining. The agricultural sector is particularly affected where production is labour-intensive.

Objectives

6.12 A number of **goals** have been formulated through extensive consultations in various international forums attended by virtually all Governments, relevant United Nations agencies (including WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCO, UNDP and the World Bank) and a number of non-governmental organizations. Goals (including but not limited to those listed below) are recommended for implementation by all countries where they are applicable, with appropriate adaptation to the specific situation of each country in terms of phasing, standards, priorities, and availability of resources, with respect for cultural, religious and social aspects in keeping with freedom, dignity and personally held values, taking into account ethical considerations. Additional goals that are particularly relevant to a country's specific situation should be added in the country's national plan of action (**Plan of Action for implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s**). Such national level action plans should be coordinated and monitored from within the public health sector. Some major goals are:

(a) By the year 2000, to **eliminate Guinea worm disease (dracunculiasis)**;

(b) By the year 2000, **eradicate polio**;

(c) By the year 2000, to effectively **control onchocerciasis (river blindness) and leprosy**;

(d) By 1995, to **reduce measles deaths by 95 per cent and reduce measles cases by 90 per cent** compared with pre-immunization levels;

(e) By continued efforts, to provide health and hygiene education and to **ensure universal access to safe drinking water and universal access to sanitary measures of excreta disposal**, thereby markedly reducing waterborne diseases such as cholera and schistosomiasis; and,

(i) By the year 2000, **the number of deaths from childhood diarrhoea in developing countries by between 50 to 70 per cent**;

(ii) By the year 2000, to **reduce the incidence**

of childhood diarrhoea in developing countries by at least 25 to 50 per cent;

(f) By the year 2000, to initiate comprehensive programmes to **reduce mortality from acute respiratory infections in children under five years by at least one third, particularly in countries with high infant mortality;**

(g) By the year 2000, to **provide 95 per cent of the world's child population with access to appropriate care for acute respiratory infections** within the community and at first referral level;

(h) By the year 2000, to institute anti-malaria programmes in all countries where malaria presents a significant health problem and maintain the transmission-free status of areas freed from endemic malaria;

(i) By the year 2000, to implement control programmes in countries where major human parasitic infections are endemic and achieve an overall reduction in the prevalence of **schistosomiasis** and

of other trematode infections by 40 per cent and 25 per cent respectively from a 1984 baseline, as well as a marked reduction in incidence, prevalence and intensity of filarial infections;

(j) To mobilize and unify national and international efforts against **AIDS** to prevent infection and to reduce the personal and social impact of HIV infection;

(k) To contain the resurgence of tuberculosis with particular emphasis on multiple antibiotic resistant forms;

(l) To **accelerate research on improved vaccines and implement to the fullest extent possible the use of vaccines** in the prevention of disease.

Paragraphs (d) to (g) are taken directly from the WSC Plan of Action and the targets for reducing diarrhoea deaths and providing care for ARI are, in fact, raised by Agenda 21. And the final paragraph gives direct support to the new Children's Vaccine Initiative.

Protecting vulnerable groups

This programme area identifies infants (along with youth, women, indigenous people and the very poor) as vulnerable groups needing special protection and education as a prerequisite for sutainable development.

The **Basis for action** paragraph for children is:

> 6.19 **Infants and children:** Approximately one third of the world's population are children under 15 years old. At least 15 million of these children die annually from such preventable causes as birth trauma, birth asphyxia, acute respiratory infections, malnutrition, communicable diseases and diarrhoea. The health of children is affected more severely than other population groups by malnutrition and adverse environmental factors, and many children risk exploitation as cheap labour or in prostitution.

And for women:

> 6.21 **Women:** In developing countries, the health status of women remains relatively low, and during the 1980s poverty, malnutrition and general ill-health in women

were even rising. Most women in developing countries still do not have adequate basic educational opportunities and they lack the means of promoting their health, responsibly controlling their reproductive life and improving their socio-economic status. Particular attention should be given to the provision of pre-natal care to ensure healthy babies.

The **Objectives** section for children contains the following:

6.24 Specific major goals for child survival, development and protection were agreed upon at the World Summit for Children and remain valid also for Agenda 21. Supporting and sectoral goals cover women's health and education, nutrition, child health, water and sanitation, basic education and children in difficult circumstances.

6.25 Governments should take active steps to implement, as a matter of urgency, in accordance with country specific conditions and legal systems, measures to ensure that women and men have the same right to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children, to have access to the information,

education and means, as appropriate, to enable them to exercise this right in keeping with their freedom, dignity and personally held values taking into account ethical and cultural considerations.

6.26 Governments should take active steps to implement programmes to establish and strengthen preventive and curative health facilities which include women-centred, women-managed, safe and effective reproductive health care and affordable, accessible services as appropriate for the responsible planning of family size, in keeping with freedom, dignity and personally held values, taking into account ethical and cultural considerations. Programmes should focus on providing comprehensive health care, including pre-natal care, education and information on health and responsible parenthood and should provide the opportunity for all women to fully breastfeed at least during the first four months post-partum. Programmes should fully support women's productive and reproductive roles and well being, with special attention to the need for providing equal and improved health care for all children and the need to reduce the risk of maternal and child mortality and sickness.

And the **Activities** section says:

6.27 National Governments, in cooperation with local and non-governmental organizations should initiate or enhance programmes in the following areas:

(a) Infants and children

(i) Strengthen basic health care services for children, in the context of primary health care delivery including prenatal care, breast-feeding, immunization and nutrition programmes;

(ii) Undertake widespread adult education on the use of oral rehydration therapy for diarrhoea, treatment of respiratory infections and prevention of communicable diseases;

(iii) Promote the creation, amendment, and enforcement of a legal framework protecting children from sexual and workplace exploitation;

(iv) Protect children from the effects of environmental and occupational toxic compounds.

In the same paragraph, programme activities for women include:

> **(c)** (ii) Provide concrete incentives to encourage and maintain attendance of women of all ages at school and adult education courses, including health education and training in primary, home and maternal health care.

Agenda 21 also includes **cost indications,** prepared by the UNCED secretariat, for each programme area. These must not be taken as commitments in any way, but the estimates for these two key health programme areas are:

> Control of communicable diseases: about $4 billion (including $900 million from the international community on grant or concessional terms); and
> Protecting vulnerable groups: about $3.7 billion (including $400 million on grant or concessional terms).

Chapter 18: Protection of freshwater resources

The major child-related interest in this chapter is the programme area on **drinking-water supply and sanitation**, for which the objectives were described in the Health chapter (see 6.12 (e) page 25).

In January 1992 the World Water Conference's Dublin Declaration articulated four principles for water resource management:

1. water management must use a holistic approach;

2. water programmes must use a participatory approach;

3. women have a crucial role in providing, managing and protecting water, and

4. water should be treated as "an economic good".

The Guatemalan representative speaking at the culminating Global Children's Hearing

The Dublin Conference was separate from, but under the overall umbrella of, the Earth Summit to which it submitted a report.

One of the surprises from Rio, therefore, is that the final version of Agenda 21 dropped all references to the World Water Conference. This was essentially because of the diplomatic manoeuvring on general issues at the Earth Summit rather than any major technical problems with the work of the Dublin Conference.

At Rio, some developing countries insisted that references to the Dublin Conference should be dropped because it was a meeting of technical experts, not an official intergovernmental meeting. As the principles of the Dublin Declaration are incorporated within the programme areas, the operational aspects in Agenda 21 are not affected.

A more serious problem in Rio was that of setting quantifiable targets for the programme areas: developing countries felt that quantifiable targets should not be set without guarantees of "new and additional resources" for the programmes. When the financial issues were resolved, in the Earth Summit's final hours, it was agreed that all States

"could" set these targets "according to their capacities and available resources".

From the UNICEF point of view, the important point is that this chapter greatly supports and strengthens our work in this field.

Drinking-water supply and sanitation

In brief, the programme area on drinking-water supply and sanitation refers to the WSC and has many aspects very much in line with UNICEF approach, including:

- emphasis on low-cost services at community level;
- participation of and special programmes for women;
- broad-based education programmes with emphasis on hygiene, local management and risk reduction;
- community-managed water systems;
- promotion of PHC and Primary Environmental Care; and

- greater attention to underserved and low-income, peri-urban areas.

Remembering that the WSC goals for water and sanitation are already included in Agenda 21's chapter on health, the **objectives** for this programme area include the following:

> 18.49 Past experience has shown that specific targets should be set by each individual country. At the World Summit for Children, in September 1990, heads of State or Government called for both universal access to water supply and sanitation and the eradication of guinea worm disease by 1995. Even for the more realistic target of achieving full coverage in water supply by 2025, it is estimated that annual investments must reach double the current levels. One realistic strategy to meet present and future needs, therefore, is to develop lower cost but adequate services that can be implemented and sustained at the community level.

The Agenda 21 cost indication for implementing this programme area is about $20 billion, including about $7.4 billion from the international community on grant or concessional terms.

VOICE OF THE CHILDREN
FUNAM
VOZ DAS CRIANÇAS

Chapter 3: Combating poverty

The linkages between poverty, environment and development were a major focus of UNCED's work. In the UNCED jargon they were described as "cross-cutting issues", meaning that these issues had to be dealt with by an integrated approach going beyond individual sectors.

This chapter has one programme area, titled "enabling the poor to achieve sustainable livelihoods". It generally reinforces the traditional approach of focussing on "the poorest of the poor" adopted by UNICEF and other agencies, and obviously advocates higher priority and resources for this approach. The following quotes may help post-Rio advocacy on these issues.

The **Basis for action** section has useful "overview" language:

> 3.1 Poverty is a complex multidimensional problem with origins in both the national and international domains. No uniform solution can be found for global

Interaction at the Global Children's Hearing, part of the Voice of the Children project, supported by UNICEF.

application. Rather, country-specific programmes to tackle poverty and international efforts supporting national efforts, as well as the parallel process of creating a supportive international environment are crucial for a solution to this problem. The eradication of poverty and hunger, greater equity in income distribution and human resources development remain major challenges everywhere. The struggle against poverty is the shared responsibility of all countries.

3.2 While managing resources sustainably, an environmental policy that focuses mainly on the conservation and protection of resources must take due account of those who depend on the resources for their livelihoods. Otherwise it could have an adverse impact both on poverty and on chances for long-term success in resource and environmental conservation. Equally, a development policy that focuses mainly on increasing the production of goods without addressing the sustainability of the resources on which production is based will sooner or later run into declining productivity, which could also have an adverse impact on poverty. A specific anti-poverty strategy is therefore one of the basic conditions for ensuring sustainable develop-

ment. An effective strategy for tackling problems of poverty, development and environment simultaneously should begin by focusing on resources, production and people, and should cover demographic issues, enhanced health care and education, the rights of women, the role of youth and of indigenous people and local communities and a democratic participation process in association with improved governance.

The **activities** section strengthens the people/community-focussed approach:

3.5 Activities that will contribute to the integrated promotion of sustainable livelihoods and environmental protection cover a variety of sectoral interventions involving a range of actors, from local to global, and are essential at every level, especially the community and local levels.Enabling actions will be necessary at the national and international levels, taking full account of regional and subregional conditions to support a locally driven and country-specific approach. In general design, the programmes should:

(a) Focus on the empowerment of local and com-

munity groups through the principle of delegating authority, accountability and resources to the most appropriate level to ensure that the programme will be geographically and ecologically specific;

(b) Contain immediate measures to enable those groups to alleviate poverty and to develop sustainability;

(c) Contain a long-term strategy aimed at establishing the best possible conditions for sustainable local, regional and national development that would eliminate poverty and reduce the inequalities between various population groups. It should assist the most disadvantaged groups – in particular, women, children and youth within those groups - and refugees. The groups will include poor smallholders, pastoralists, artisans, fishing communities, landless people, indigenous communities, migrants and the urban informal sector.

3.6 The focus here is on specific cross-cutting measures – in particular, in the areas of basic education, primary/maternal health care, and the advancement of women.

On **empowering communities**, the text says:

> 3.7 Sustainable development must be achieved at every level of society. Peoples' organizations, women's groups and non-governmental organizations are important sources of innovation and action at the local level and have a strong interest and proven ability to promote sustainable livelihoods. Governments, in cooperation with appropriate international and non-governmental organizations, should support a community-driven approach to sustainability.

And the section on **management-related activities** includes virtually an endorsement of the UNICEF programming approach:

> 3.8 Governments, with the assistance of and in cooperation with appropriate international, non-governmental, and local community organizations, should establish measures which will directly or indirectly: (. . .)
>
> (d) Empower community organizations and people to enable them to achieve sustainable livelihoods;

(e) Set up an effective primary health care and maternal health care system accessible to all;

(f) Consider strengthening/developing legal frameworks for land management, access to land resources and land ownership – in particular, for women – and for the protection of tenants;

(h) Establish new community-based mechanisms and strengthen existing mechanisms to enable communities to gain sustained access to resources needed by the poor to overcome their poverty;

(i) Implement mechanisms for popular participation – particularly by poor people, especially women – in local community groups, to promote sustainable development;

(j) Implement, as a matter of urgency, in accordance with country-specific conditions and legal systems, measures to ensure that women and men have the same right to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children, to have access to the information, education and

means, as appropriate, to enable them to exercise this right in keeping with their freedom, dignity and personally held values taking into account ethical and cultural considerations. Governments should take active steps to implement programmes to establish and strengthen preventive and curative health facilities, which include women-centred, women-managed, safe and effective reproductive health care and affordable, accessible services, as appropriate, for the responsible planning of family size, in keeping with freedom, dignity and personally held values, taking into account ethical and cultural considerations. Programmes should focus on providing comprehensive health care, including pre-natal care, education and information on health and responsible parenthood and should provide the opportunity for all women to breastfeed fully, at least during the first four months post-partum. Programmes should fully support women's productive and reproductive roles and well-being, with special attention to the need for providing equal and improved health care for all children and the need to reduce the risk of maternal and child mortality and sickness;

(N.B. This is the same language as used in the Health chapter.)

(l) Undertake activities aimed at the promotion of food security and, where appropriate, food self-sufficiency within the context of sustainable agriculture;

(m) Support research on and integration of traditional methods of production which have been shown to be environmentally sustainable;

(o) Consider making available lines of credit and other facilities for the informal sector and improved access to land for the landless poor so that they can acquire the means of production and reliable access to natural resources. In many instances special considerations for women are required. Strict feasibility appraisals are needed for borrowers to avoid debt crises;

(p) Provide the poor with access to fresh water and sanitation;

(q) Provide the poor with access to primary education.

The whole United Nations system, "with Member States and with appropriate international and non-governmental organizations, should make poverty alleviation a major priority". National action programmes on poverty alleviation and sustainable development are specifically proposed.

Chapter 5: Demographic dynamics and sustainability

This chapter deals with another major set of cross-cutting issues, i.e. those of population, environment and development.

It now contains stronger references to breastfeeding, comprehensive maternal and child care and "equal and improved health care for children". The chapter also contains important provisions on women's issues, most of which have been mentioned above.

As described above (in Health and Poverty), the text relating to family planning was unchanged in Rio, despite strong lobbying. Delegates at Rio were also aware that these sensitive issues remain on the international agenda and will be a prime focus of the 1994 United Nations Conference on Population and Development in Cairo.

It is encouraging that Agenda 21 endorses and gives global priority to working with non-governmental organizations – and uses words like "partners" and "participation". The chapter's objectives and activities are sensible, if rather general recommendations aimed at improving how governments, the UN system and NGOs can better work together.

The **Basis for action** text is a useful summary of the role and purpose of work with NGOs:

> 27.1 Non-governmental organizations play a vital role in the shaping and implementation of participatory democracy. Their credibility lies in the responsible and constructive role they play in society. Formal and informal organizations, as well as grass-roots movements, should be recognized as partners in the implementation of Agenda 21. The nature of the independent role played by non-governmental organizations within a society calls for real participation; therefore, independence is a major attribute of non-governmental organizations and is the precondition of real participation.

27.2 One of the major challenges facing the world community as it seeks to replace unsustainable development patterns with environmentally sound and sustainable development is the need to activate a sense of common purpose on behalf of all sectors of society. The chances of forging such a sense of purpose will depend on the willingness of all sectors to participate in genuine social partnership and dialogue, while recognizing the independent roles, responsibilities and special capacities of each.

27.3 Non-governmental organizations, including those non-profit organizations representing groups addressed in the present section of Agenda 21, possess well-established and diverse experience, expertise and capacity in fields which will be of particular importance to the implementation and review of environmentally sound and socially responsible sustainable develop-

ment, as envisaged throughout Agenda 21. The community of non-governmental organizations, therefore offers a global network which should be tapped, enabled and strengthened in support of efforts to achieve these common goals.

27.4 To ensure that the full potential contribution of non-governmental organizations is realized, the fullest possible communication and cooperation between international organizations, national and local governments and non-governmental organizations should be promoted in institutions mandated, and programmes designed to carry out Agenda 21. Non-governmental organizations will also need to foster cooperation and communication among themselves to reinforce their effectiveness as actors in the implementation of sustainable development.

On **capacity-building**, the chapter also says that the UN system will need to provide increased financial and administrative support for NGOs and their networks, including training at the international and regional levels.

Chapter 36: Promoting education, public awareness and training

Given the priority to education, training and communication in UNICEF daily work, it is always something of a surprise to realise this is not the norm elsewhere. Thus there is feeling when reading this chapter that it could have gone further in its recommendations on public awareness. Nonetheless it does include some important wording, particularly on education.

As the first **Objective** for "reorienting education towards sustainable development" paragraph 36.4 proposes:

> (a) To endorse the recommendations arising from the World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs (Jomtien, Thailand, 5-9 March 1990) and to strive to ensure universal access to basic education, and to achieve primary education for at least 80 per cent of girls and 80 per cent of boys of primary school-age through formal schooling or non-formal education and to reduce the adult illiteracy rate to at least half of its 1990 level. Efforts should focus on reducing the high illiteracy levels and redressing the lack of basic education among women and should bring their literacy levels into line with those of men.

Children and the Tree of Life at the Global Forum.

As an **Activity,** paragraph 36.5 says:

> (a) All countries are encouraged to endorse the recommendations of the Jomtien Conference and strive to ensure its Framework for Action. This would encompass the preparation of national strategies and actions for meeting basic learning needs, universalizing access and promoting equity, broadening the means and scope of education, developing a supporting policy context, mobilizing resources and strengthening international cooperation to redress existing economic, social and gender disparities which interfere with these aims. Non-governmental organizations can make an important contribution in designing and implementing educational programmes and should be recognized.

Further on, the same paragraph proposes:

> (e) Relevant authorities should ensure that every school is assisted in designing environmental activity work plans, with the participation of students and staff. Schools should involve schoolchildren in local and regional studies on environmental health, including safe drinking water, sanitation and food and ecosystems and in relevant activities, linking these studies with services and research in national parks, wildlife reserves, ecological heritage sites etc.
>
> and
>
> (m) Governments and educational authorities should foster opportunities for women in non-traditional fields and eliminate gender stereotyping in curricula. This could be done by improving enrolment opportunities, including females in advanced programmes as students and instructors, reforming entrance and teacher staffing policies and providing incentives for establishing child-care facilities, as appropriate. Priority should be given to education of young females and to programmes promoting literacy among women.

Increasing public awareness

This section has some straightforward general prescriptions for increasing public sensitivty to environment and development problems but specifically mentions UNICEF for two activities, in paragraph 36.10:

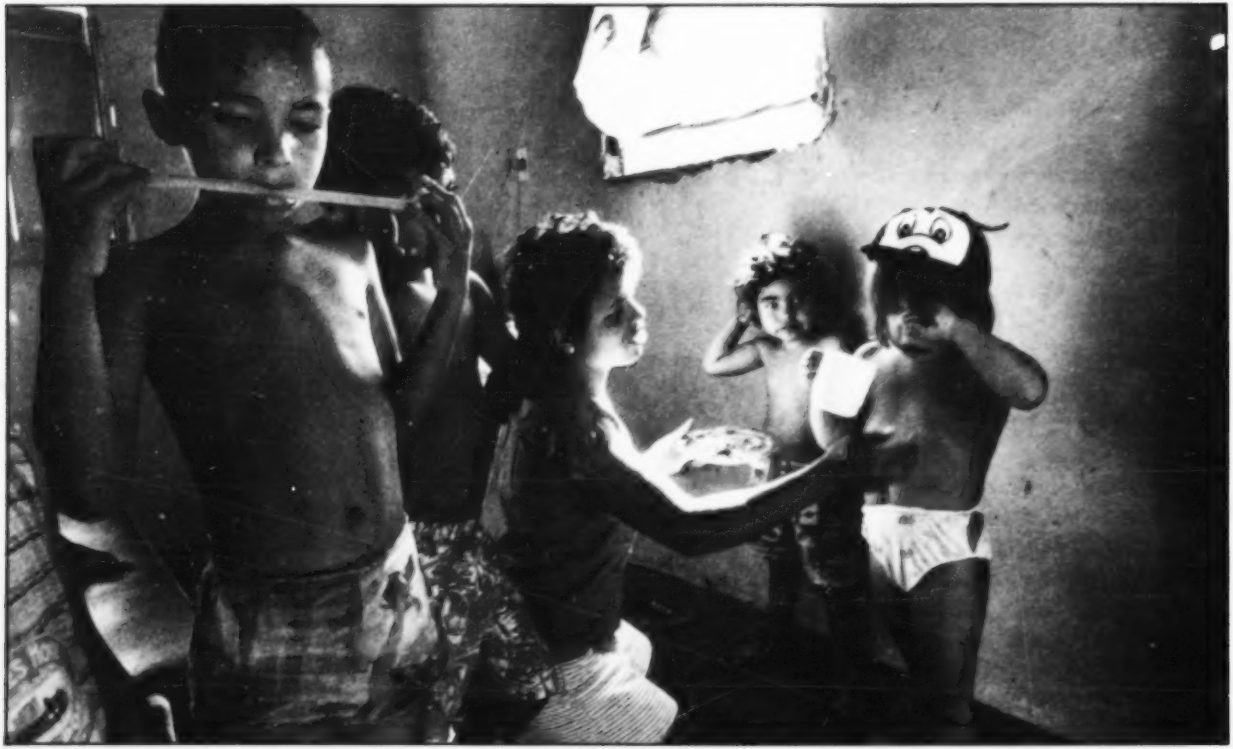
> (e) Countries and the United Nations system should promote a cooperative relationship with the media, popular theatre groups, and entertainment and advertising industries by initiating discussions to mobilize their experience in shaping public behaviour and consumption patterns and making wide use of their methods. Such cooperation would also increase the active public participation in the debate on the environment. UNICEF should make child-oriented material available to media as an educational tool, ensuring close cooperation between the out-of-school public information sector and the school curriculum, for the primary level. UNESCO, UNEP and universities should enrich pre-service curricula for journalists on environment and development topics.
>
> (j) UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP and non-governmental organizations should develop support programmes to

involve young people and children in environment and development issues, such as children's and youth hearings, building on decisions of the World Summit for Children.

Promoting training

The activities proposed generally focus on adult and vocational training but do include the following:

> 36.21 Countries should develop a service of locally trained and recruited environmental technicians able to provide local people and communities, particularly in deprived urban and rural areas, with the services they require, starting from primary environmental care.



Chapter 33: Financial resources and mechanisms

"Who pays" was, of course, the most crucial issue at Rio and negotiations broke down several times. Agreement was only reached in the final hours after a tense, closed-door meeting at Ministerial level.

The issues are complex and detailed but the essential points are these:

- The secretariat-estimated annual cost of implementing Agenda 21 by 2000 is about $600 billion. Much of this will come from developing countries themselves, but $125 billion should be on grant or concessional terms from external sources. This was the sum being negotiated by the Earth Summit.

- The developing countries would have preferred "new and additional resources" for implementing Agenda 21 in a separate fund but, after the negotiations, settled for the expression "all available funding sources and mechanisms".

Meanwhile, back in the favelas, life goes on.

- These "sources and mechanisms" include all forms of official development assistance, regional and sub-regional development banks, UN sources, bilateral assistance programmes, other international organisations, debt relief, private funding and a restructured Global Environment Facility (GEF).

- The GEF (administered by the World Bank, UNDP and UNEP) was accepted by the developing countries only after receiving guarantees that it would be restructured to permit them a voice in its decision-making – and that it would not impose any new conditions on the funds.

- The industrialised countries reaffirmed their 20-year-old commitment to reaching the UN target of providing 0.7 per cent of their GNPs as official development assistance. Those who have already achieved this target were complimented: those who have not agreed "to augment their aid programmes in order to reach that target as soon as possible and to ensure a prompt and effective implementation of Agenda 21."

- Progress towards this target will be monitored by the new Commission on Sustainable Development – the major follow-up mechanism to UNCED which should be established by the 47th UN General Assembly later this year.

Thus all significant programme activities for children and their families are now integrated into the Agenda 21 action plan – and therefore endorsed for funding by whatever resources are provided for Agenda 21.

There was some popular disappointment in Rio that more specific financial pledges were not made by national leaders. Welcome as these are, the Earth Summit was not a pledging conference but a negotiating conference to set priorities and mechanisms, which it has done. It is now up to governments and the international community to provide the resources.

It may already be a cliche, but the Earth Summit was not an end in itself, only the beginning of a long process to safeguard life on Earth.

What next?

The world's leaders have already reported back to their people. And other summits have already endorsed many decisions from Rio. Within the UN system, the General Assembly's decisions on the Earth Summit's recommendations are the next crucial step.

UNICEF's Executive Board, which met immediately after the Earth Summit, has already welcomed and endorsed the decisions from Rio on children, environment and development.

The important task now is to let people know how the Earth Summit helped children. We hope these few pages help you with this task.

For further information, please contact :

United Nations Children's Fund
UNICEF House
3, United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017, USA

or

UNICEF Geneva
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

or your nearest UNICEF office.

Printed on eco-friendly paper